

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7715

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 4783

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: "POP" MAGAZINE EDITOR CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL LIBEL
AGAINST SUHARTO

REF: A) JAKARTA A187, 10/6/74; B) JAKARTA 071

BEGIN SUMMARY: REY HANITIO, EDITOR OF OPSUS-OWNED "POP" MAGAZINE WHO WAS CHARGED WITH PUBLISHING DEFAMATORY ARTICLE LAST OCTOBER CLAIMING SUHARTO WAS ILLEGITIMATE SON OF NOBLEMAN, WAS CONVICTED BY JAKARTA COURT OF CRIMINAL LIBEL APRIL 19 AND WAS SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IN JAIL. TRIAL DID NOT DWELL ON POLITICAL OVERTONES OF CASE, AND PRESUMABLY BRINGS THIS STRANGE INCIDENT TO CLOSE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ARTICLE IN "POP MAGAZINE, WHICH WAS CONTROLLED BY PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ALI MURTOPO'S OPSUS (SPECIAL OPERATIONS), CREATED SENSATION WHEN SUHARTO BANNED MAGAZINE AND ANGRILY DENOUNCED ROYAL ANCESTRY STORY AS SUBVERSIVE, SCOLDING OPSUS AND, BY IMPLICATION, EMBARRASSING MURTOPO IN THE PROCESS (REF A).

2. HANITIO'S TRIAL DID NOT, AS MURTOPO'S DETRACTORS HAD HOPED, INCREASE MURTOPO'S DISCOMFITURE BY STRESSING HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH "POP", AND BY IMPLICATION, RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STORY (REF B). MURTOPO'S OPSUS MAN IN "POP" N THE
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MAGAZINE'S GENERAL CHAIRMAN A. SOEGianto, TESTIFIED HE

KNEW NOTHING ABOUT ARTICLE AND HAD WARNED HANITIO AGAINST PUBLISHING SUCH ARTICLES. NO ONE CONTESTED SOEGianto's DISCLAIMER; AND 21 OTHER WITNESSES, 13 OF THEM FROM SUHARTO'S VILLAGE, TESTIFIED TO THE EFFECT OHAT THE "POP" STORY THAT SUHARTO WAS ILLEGITIMATE SON OF YOGYAKARTA NOBLEMAN WAS TOTAL FABRICATION. AUTHOR OF ARTICLE ULTIMATELY STATED SHE NO LONGER BELIEVED STORY EITHER. IN DELIVERING VERDICT, JUDGE PREACHED ABOUT PRESS ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY AND ID NOT MENTION SUBVERSION ASPECT OF CASE WHICH SUHARTO HAD STRESSED IN OCTOBER 1974 PRESS CONFERENCE (REF A).

3. MANY OBSERVERS THINK "POP" CASE NOW CLOSED, AND DOUBT THAT SUHARTO WILL FOLLOW WITH EARLIER THREAT TO BRING PRIVATE SUHARTO FAMILY CIVIL ACTION AGAINST "POP" (REF B). FACT THAT MURTOPO STILL SERVES AS SUHARTO ADVISOR, WITH SLIGHTLY REDUCED BUT STILL SUBSTANTIAL INFLUENCE, SEEMS TO CONFIRM OUR EARLIER ESTIMATE THAT WHILE MURTOPO WOULD BE CHASTENED BY "POP" INCIDENT, HE WOULD NOT BE BANISHED FROM SUHARTO'S COURT.
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